

# INTEGRITY

9-1

OCTOBER 1954



LIBRARY  
TRANSCENDANT  
SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY  
CLAREMONT

## *The Priest & the Layman*

ROLE OF THE PRIEST

CONFESSION AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE TEMPORAL ORDER

25

# INTEGRITY, October 1954, Vol. 9, No. 1

v. 9  
1954/  
55.

EDITORIAL	1
THE PRIEST'S ROLE IN THE MODERN WORLD by Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A.	2
ESCHATOLOGY—AND THE TEMPORAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN by Georges Didier, S.J.	10
MARGARET CLEMENT (a Poem) by J. E. P. Butler	22
AN INQUIRY ON CONFESSION AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION by Dorothy Dohen	24
SUNDAY SERMONS by Susan Candle	36
BOOK REVIEWS	42

Integrity is published by lay Catholics and devoted  
to the integration of religion and life for our times.

Published monthly by Integrity Publishing Co., Inc., 157 East 38th  
Street, New York 16, N. Y., MU-5-8125. Edited by Dorothy  
Dohen. Re-entered as Second Class Matter May 11, 1950 at the  
Post Office in New York, N. Y. under the Act of March 3, 1879.  
All single copies 25¢ each; yearly subscription: Domestic \$3.00,  
Canadian \$3.50, Foreign \$4.00.

## Editorial

WITH a renewed awareness of the lay person's part in the Church there should be no diminution of the exalted role of the priest. Confusion over the proper work of the lay apostolate, a lack of spiritual maturity on the part of the lay apostle, and above all, a defective understanding of the nature of the Church, have at times lessened the stature of the priest in lay eyes. An anti-clericalism—sometimes more a matter of words than really heartfelt—has been the result. At the least it showed itself in excessive petty criticism of priests, and prevented a really fruitful collaboration of priests and people in their common apostolate; at the most it left the would-be self-sufficient layman out on a limb where he received no life from the Vine. For the priest, the dispenser of the Sacraments, is the normal conductor of the life-giving graces of Christ.

The more the lay person grows in grace, the more he is attuned to the mystery of the priesthood, the more he is full of reverence for priests—not in the naive way of "Father can do no wrong." Charity is not a pair of blinders; reverence for the priest as Christ does not exclude recognizing or accepting his human limitations. But faith penetrates beyond appearances; in love the child recognizes its father.

For a father is truly what the priest is and what the lay person expects him to be. Whether or not he can verbalize thus, he doesn't expect the priest to be on his level, he expects to look up to him, to see him "as one having authority," to trust him because God has given him responsibility, to be secure in his ministrations because God has endowed them with power. The Christian expects the priest to be interested, to be aware of his needs, to teach and to treat and rebuke as the case warrants, but above all, as a father would, to *love*.

THE EDITOR

341553

AUG 11 X



# *The Priest's Role in the Modern World*

by DENNIS J. GEANEY, O.S.A.

*A priest noted for his interest  
in the lay apostolate  
discusses the apostolate of the priest.*

My friends may say that it is because I have a tin ear that I did not wax eloquent about Bing Crosby's *Going My Way*. It was the picture of a priest who could sing, play a piano, get into a ball game of dead-end kids on a busy city street, and finally painlessly extract money from a rich person to build a church. Why was I so critical? Was it because these things are wrong? Quite the contrary. Its emphasis was badly misplaced. The picture failed to show what a priest really is. And because it was lacking in the portrayal of the essential elements of the priesthood, a friend referred to the priest of *Going My Way* as a "YMCA director with a roman collar."

While the average American might like to see in the priest the all-American grown-up boy, one can err in the opposite direction by making him a kind of wonder worker. One of my recollections about the priesthood in my growing up days in a densely Irish immigrant neighborhood was an incident during the periodic visitation of the parish by the priests. One of the children was ill when the priest visited a family in the block. The priest looked at the child and gave a casual diagnosis of the illness. As far as the family was concerned this passing remark was almost on a level with an infallible pronouncement. This exaggeration of the power of the priest by some immigrants can be easily explained. They had been deprived of the opportunity to learn. The priest became the symbol not only of spiritual power but of all learning, thus exaggerating the role of priestliness.

All this changed with the generation following the immigrants. I remember when I had begun the study of economics, a priest in a sermon referred to the economic order. As much as I personally liked the priest my first reaction was what does he know about it, what business has he talking about it. It was just a taste of learning that made me cut the priest to what I considered his size should be. I was still in my teens and only one generation removed from immigrant status when mentally I had stripped the priest of his right to make moral application to the economic order.

**The priest and economics.** A few years ago at a meeting of the central committee of the local federation of labor a motion was entertained that I be appointed chaplain of the federation. The motion was countered by another motion that a certain Protestant minister be also appointed. The whole idea was then dropped. It was a few years later that I heard of the incident. If I had been chosen, I suppose I would have accepted. How could I have refused? I am a firm believer in the sanctification of all of day life. Labor unions as well as every segment of the temporal order need the prayers and counsel of a priest. Institutions as well as individuals must come under the sway and rule of Christ the King. Labor unions belong to Christ by divine right. Furthermore, the priest is a living sacrament; where he is, Christ is. At the same time I am glad I was not appointed. People would have more reason to label me a "labor" priest. And no priest wants such a tag or any prefix before the word "priest" that indicates he belongs exclusively to any group.

A priest as a sharer in the priesthood of the Sovereign Priest, Jesus Christ, belongs to all people. If to be pro-labor as a priest means to be anti-capital, as a priest I cannot be pro-labor. However as a priest I must be pro-justice. When a priest is pro-justice he might be in labor's corner on one issue and in management's the next. Because the priest is regarded by the community as one who seeks justice both sides will try to lure him to their side to bolster their cause. Because of the fear of being duped, priests must exercise a cautious reserve but at the same time they must not be guilty of the rebuke of the present Holy Father who warns priests against "cautious inaction."

The reason why all priests, with only one notable exception, who have made a scientific study of the Church's social teaching have been either called "labor" priests or at least considered favor-



able to labor's cause is because the scales of justice in the past were not balanced and the working man suffered grave injustice. The cause of justice and labor happened to coincide. How could a priest avoid entering in the battle for justice when the people of his community were receiving less than a living wage and when industry could pay it and the common good would not suffer? Would he be meddling in the affairs outside his jurisdiction if he spoke in favor of the living wage when the battle was joined between employer and employees?

If people are exploited by landlords because no homes are available for purchase or rent at prices a wage earner can afford, should a priest speak up and demand either private industry or government or both to step into the breach and remedy the nasty situation? Should he speak up at the risk of being called a dupe of the socialists, a precursor of communism? I think he should. He was not ordained to preach to people what they like to hear.

**Where is the connection?** What have decent labor conditions, good wages, and good housing to do with the salvation of souls which is the work of the priest? We save or lose our souls amidst the surroundings in which we live. While it is not impossible, due to God's grace, it is extremely difficult for the family who prays together to stay together if they are cooped up in a one-room apartment. It is hard to love God on an empty stomach. Very often girls make a practice of doing evil things because they cannot find a job or a place to live away from evil surroundings. If we consider it necessary to have hospitals that minister to the needs of the body, we need priests who will speak out against conditions that lead to the destruction of the divine life of the soul.

Within the past year an American bishop spoke very plainly on a red hot civic issue. At the end of the speech that was quoted in papers everywhere in the world, he stated that he was not speaking as bishop but as a citizen and such was his right. Catholics who violently disagreed with him argued that he was committing the Church in a purely civic matter. They said that it is impossible to separate the role of priest from citizen. When a Catholic bishop, priest, or layman speaks, we must learn to distinguish between what is Catholic doctrine and the opinion of a Catholic. This is not too difficult for a Catholic or non-Catholic. Otherwise the bishop or priest would have to relinquish his right to speak as a citizen.

The school in which I teach was inundated with water during a flood and also caused extensive damage to home owners. A civic committee was chosen to investigate, to make recommendations, and if necessary to sponsor a referendum that would tax all the people of the area for the improvements necessary to prevent future floods. I was appointed to the committee. I suspect one of the reasons for my appointment was the fact that I was a Catholic priest and would have the ear of the Catholic people and would raise a civic campaign to the level of religion. I believed that a priest could act on such a commission as a citizen, never denying or hiding his priesthood, but without committing the Church to a technical proposal to which there might conceivably be an alternate or better proposal of the committee. One of the resolutions I made before the campaign was not to use the pulpit even to announce that there was a vote. I did ask for a hearing before Catholic groups, making sure that people could present contrary views in the give and take of discussion following my talk. I suppose there were Catholics who heard my appeal who voted against the proposal, but never did I hear the criticism that I was equating a technical solution with Catholic doctrine. In distinguishing the role of a priest and a citizen, the priest must do some tight-rope walking. I think it can and must be done without his losing his balance.

**The priest's essential role.** Thus far we have been dealing with an aspect of the priest's ministry among men. In fact the priest's role in the temporal order cannot be rightly understood unless we understand his essential role which determines his relationships with society and individuals. "The office proper to a priest," writes St. Thomas, "is to be a mediator between God and the people. . . ."

Christ is the mediator between God and man. He became mediator in the womb of Mary by dint of the union of the divine and human natures in one person. By becoming a man the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became a member of the human race. This fact of being one of us made Him a mediator. Thus He could take upon Himself the sins of the human race. While exempt from sin He was a member of a fallen race. On the cross He achieved its restoration. On the cross His mediation or His priesthood reached its climax. He exercised His priesthood to its fullness in offering Himself to His Father.



Each ordained priest participates in Christ's priesthood to the point that he renews the redemptive work of Christ as often as he offers holy Mass. Lay people because of their baptism share the priesthood of Christ to the degree that they can be represented by the priest. The priest then is the ordinary channel through which Christ's life is poured into the lay people, who in the words of St. Peter are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people."

The first duty, then, of both priest and people is to worship. The Sacrament of Holy Orders gives the priest the power from God to act as the representative of the whole Church and particularly the baptized members who come to offer with him. Following from the priest's role of offering sacrifice is the duty to pray for God's people and administer the Sacraments. All these functions take priority over his role in the temporal order. While these other roles of the priest are more important, it does not mean his role in the temporal order is unrelated to his priesthood or unimportant. However, he does not take his place in the temporal order as a layman who has a primary responsibility for it. The priest must carry out the prophetic tradition of being God's mouthpiece. It is not enough for him to help lay people take their part in lay life. He has his own witness to bear in society. He does this when he speaks out any time the dignity of man is affronted by certain pieces of legislation or the lack of certain legislative measures, when the government takes away man's freedom by doing too much or leaves him in his misery by not doing what is in its power. For this witness bearing the priest must expect rebuke and misunderstanding.

**The layman's job.** The layman, too, has his witness to bear. It is his responsibility in a different way from the priest. It is the layman's vocation; he is immersed in it. While the priest may pass judgment upon it, ordinarily it is not his job to restore it since he is not a part of it. It is only by way of exception that a priest does a layman's job as a waterfront arbitrator, or a U.N. delegate. This is filled with dangers for the priest because he may meet with success to the degree that he begins to think that this is exclusively priestly work. Likewise the layman seeing the priest involved in flood control projects, or solving technical housing problems, may be inclined to let the priest continue to do it rather than assume his rightful responsibility for it and thus free the priest for work



that no layman can do as a spiritual educator and director of souls.

If lay people are ever to assume their rightful place in the Church, it will be the result of priests assisting them as chaplains of apostolic groups, confessors and spiritual counselors. The work of forming Christ in souls and preparing lay people for the apostolate is less glamorous, more trying and exacting, and demanding greater skills than preaching, teaching, or personally witnessing Christ in the social arena. It is called by St. Gregory the Great "the art of arts."

There will be little accomplished in the Church by lay people unless they understand the part the priest has to play in their spiritual development. Likewise the priest will accomplish little that is lasting if he does not help lay people find their place in the Church. The salvation of the human race does not rest with the priest or the laity alone but with the Church which includes both. The late Cardinal Suhard states it thus: "The complete instrument of evangelization is neither the one who has simply been baptized nor the priest alone, but the Christian community."

The lay people must learn to expect more from the priest than that he start Mass on time and be available for baptisms, marriages, sick calls, and funerals. They must understand that he has something they need for full Christian living and without which they ordinarily cannot reach their full stature. He has something to give that even the best educated lay Catholic cannot do without. It is the priest's job to help form Christ in the Christian. But being formed in Christ is a personal affair to a large extent. We can discuss a gospel selection together or study the liturgy or Catholic social doctrine together, but to apply it at times to our lives we need priestly counsel. When personal problems arise that need the help that he alone is ordained to give, and he has no way of knowing the existence of these problems unless he be approached by the one needing his help. It is not simply because he has read learned books on counseling, but because Christ has given him this power to help.

**Afraid of priests?** There is a certain awe that people have for priests that creates a reserve and forms a barrier that one feels like an intruder in crossing. In a discussion about this problem a boy made the comment that it helped him to see his chaplain in a Tee shirt. I have just finished reading an article in a priest's magazine on clerical dress in which the writer deplores the priest

who appears in a Tee shirt. I shall not be so rash as to defend the Tee shirt against the centuries of traditional clerical black. But the boy—seeing the priest in casual attire—had made the important discovery that priests are human beings with a capacity for understanding young people and their problems. Up to this point very likely to him a priest was someone who preached, someone who periodically cleansed his soul, someone to whom he gave and received a polite greeting on the street, but never a real person whom he would approach about the deepest problems of his life. If the priest is aware of the problem of the necessity of being approachable and genuinely human, he can remove the barrier without shedding his clerical garb. It is a part of the maturity of the lay person in realizing that the clerical dress is not to make the priest less accessible or less human, but that he is consecrated to God and that the Sacrament of Holy Orders marks him as belonging to them in a spiritual relationship.

A young girl expressed a more mature view of what to expect from a priest. She expressed herself thus: "It has always been my conviction that the work of the priest is to help us become active, mature Christians. One of the ways this is done is by having priests skilled enough to guide us along the lines of thinking things out for ourselves—that is thinking straight for ourselves. This in itself is not an easy task. With every sort of pressure acting on young people from TV to advertising, it takes a great deal of skill and patience to make them think things out for themselves, make good judgments, and feel the conviction for action and the determination to carry it through. It would be so much easier for the priest to just tell us what the answers are instead of sitting quietly at our meetings while the kids go 'round and 'round. (This is particularly true of girls' groups.) 'This point of thinking for oneself seems very important to me, if we are ever to have mature Christians. Too often we come across people who are either rectory parasites—running to the priest for every trivial thing because they are not capable of making proper decisions for themselves, or people who resent the 'authoritarian attitude' of the Church in regard to marriage, social problems and so forth, because they are too far away from the Church and its thinking to really understand."

**The priest ministers Christ.** As the priest particularly at the altar is the mediator between God and man, so likewise in all

his relationships with the laity he must be seen as a link between the Church and lay life. He ministers Christ not only by distributing the Bread of Life but also by word of mouth in or out of meetings, in or out of the pulpit or confessional.

The Holy Father was so concerned that priests give themselves to this work of assisting the Holy Spirit in the forming of Christ in lay people that while too weak to speak to the pastors and Lenten preachers of Rome he wrote out every paragraph of the message with his own hand despite his illness and fatigue. In this message he said: "But, above all, take care of their spiritual formation. Have them put on Jesus Christ; nourish them with Him; make of His Divine Heart a model from which they may draw inspiration in their thoughts, their affections, their desires, their words and actions. Have them surrender their heart in Jesus and in the arms of his heavenly Mother . . . the apostolate must be exercised in factories, in schools, in large apartment houses not only by one's presence, but also by one's actions; there must be someone to initiate and bring into action, under your guidance and with your blessing a band of 'lay missionaries.' Be exacting in pointing out their goals to them and be constant in encouraging them toward their realization . . . leave them sufficient scope for developing a spirit of eager and fruitful initiative. . . ."

Again another Pope has elaborated the teamwork that must be achieved by priest and layman in bringing the Mystical Body to its fullness. The modern world will be restored to Christ chiefly by lay people. Lay people cannot do the job without having access to the treasures of divine life that the priest can open by reason of his priesthood.



#### "HE STIRS UP THE PEOPLE"

Platitudes can soothe  
Even when bombastic,  
But truth (however crude)  
Makes men do something drastic.



# Eschatology — and the Temporal Obligations of the Christian

by GEORGES DIDIER, S.J.

*Should the Christian simply look forward to heaven or should he do anything to improve life on earth? This article, which was translated by J. V. Carroll, appeared originally in Nouvelle Revue Theologique.*

"Do you know the story of St. Demitrius? . . . He had an appointment in the desert with God and he was hastening to it when he encountered a peasant whose cart was stuck in the mud. The saint stopped to help him. The mud was thick, the bog deep and they had to struggle for an hour to free the cart. When he had finished St. Demitrius hurried on. But God had left."

This story is recounted by Kaliayev, a character in Camus' play, *Les Justes*: the author is trying to force upon us a choice between human tasks and the service of God; anyone who fears missing an appointment with God must not stop to help men. Or as the same author puts it in another work, *L'homme révolté*, the nobility of the rebel consists in refusing divinity in order to share in a common struggle and a common destiny. Strange that from the pen of one of the most lucid critics of marxism should come a new formulation of the marxist reproach. The citizen of heaven is a stranger to the city of man. Absorbed by the thought of future happiness, such a man turns his back on labor and revolt, smothering in himself the promises of tomorrows that offer bright chances of happiness here below.

Let us frankly admit it; the accusation that we look to a beyond for a state of well-being which heartbreaking misery demands for today is a cause of uneasiness for all of us. It would be simple enough to point out to Kaliayev that his strange tale contradicts the teaching of the gospel, especially the story of the good samaritan; the priest and the levite, passing by human misery, also missed their appointment with God. Besides, there is another version of the Russian legend which Camus took for his inspiration; and this version has all the marks of greater authenticity. In it, St. Nicholas and St. Cassian have appointments with God in the desert. They had donned their best garments for the occasion. On the way they met the peasant struggling to free his cart. St. Cassian hastened past, afraid that he might soil his snowy white cloak; St. Nicholas stopped to help the peasant. The story ends with the two saints facing St. Peter. He smiles at St. Nicholas and assures him that because he did not hesitate to help the poor peasant he will have two feastdays a year and will be considered by the Russian people as the greatest saint, next to St. Peter himself. Turning then to St. Cassian he tells him that he will have to be content with his snowy white cloak and assigns him for his feast day February 29th!

**An attitude of expectation.** Such answers, however valuable, are not completely reassuring. As proof I merely point to the stream of books and articles that have been inspired recently by the problem of the temporal obligations of the Christian. A more attentive reading of the New Testament, a closer acquaintance with the apostolic age, perhaps also some echo of the vigorous transcendentalism of the Protestant theologian Karl Barth, has made us more aware of the grandeur and the Christian authenticity of an attitude of detachment and expectation.

"Come, Lord Jesus!" St. Paul and St. John join in uttering this cry of suppliant impatience. Each translates it into directives for abstention. St. John: "Do not love the world, or the things that are in the world. . . . And the world with its lust is passing away . . . and the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (I John, ii, 15, 17; v, 19). And St. Paul: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remains that those who have wives be as if they had none; and those who weep, as though not weeping, and those who rejoice, as though not rejoicing; and those who buy, as though not possessing; and those who use the world, as though

not using it, for this world as we see it is passing away" (I Cor., vii, 29-31). Are not the two apostles saying that the world interposes between divine realities and us a fragile yet impenetrable screen, which might easily seduce us at the very moment when it is destined to slip away, or, in the words of the Apocalypse (xx, 11), fly from His face?

"Come, Lord Jesus!" The same appeal to the end of the world resounds in the primitive liturgy of the Church, of which, among others, the *Didache* carries an echo. And if the Lord seems to tarry the martyr hastens to meet Him, as we witness in the life of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Later, when martyrdom was less available, the fervent fled into the desert, to find there at least while awaiting God an absence of the world.

**"Constantinianism."** In the light of this tradition it is easy to understand why Christians today react with a certain violence against what they call "constantinianism." Sixteen centuries, they claim, have revealed the weaknesses which follow the act of this emperor, who installed in the world a Church that had been established to witness against the world. Yet do not those who today dream of building up a Christian city yield to the illusion of Constantine? Do we not find an eminent exegete reviving the ancient myth of the "millenium," a worldly and enduring triumph of the evangelical ideal before the end of time? Does not the end of time itself appear in the eyes of some as an apotheosis in which there will be achieved, and that without any discontinuity, the long ascension of matter toward life and spirituality?

Against this optimism Karl Barth has reacted violently, thereby following out the logic of Protestantism. In order that the gratuitousness of salvation be made completely apparent, it is necessary that nothing human prepare the way for it. What Luther said concerning the destiny of each one of the elect is equally valid for collective history. No terrestrial accomplishment, brought about even by Christians under the conduct of the Spirit, can in any way contribute to the building up of a kingdom that must ever remain the unforeseeable gift of God. Paradoxically, the Christian will be assigned profane tasks while awaiting the vertical event by which God will take possession of all things. He will play a role in temporal activities, yet the less anxious he is about it the better he will do it.

Even in the Church many theologians have uttered a protest,



more carefully worded perhaps but no less vigorous, against the dissipation of Christian energies for the betterment of a world that is destined to perish. Father Bouyer is an eminent example of such a protest. He has uttered a cry of alarm in a brilliant article which appeared in *La Vie Intellectuelle* (October, 1948). He has returned to the subject in his recent book on Newman, emphasizing all that this great convert had to say about the precariousness of this world and the necessity of keeping oneself for the next world. He maintains that the Cardinal remained faithful to the intuition of the Tractarians "up to his last breath." According to Bouyer, the Tractarians, without condemning absolutely the established powers, without condemning outright the accomplishments of modern humanity, were convinced that these powers were, willy nilly, under the command of Satan, that these accomplishments are traps laid by the spirit of pride to ensnare men of weak faith. They were therefore deeply penetrated with the feeling that this world is a world in waiting, whose dissolution can come suddenly; that Christ at any moment may come to visit, judge and condemn the world. It appears to them completely futile to exert one's efforts on any object that does not consist in compromising oneself for Christ against the world.

It cannot be denied that this idea rejoins a whole spiritual tradition, culminating in *The Imitation of Christ*. Who would dare declare it erroneous? Nevertheless, does not the logic of this position, despite all the distinctions with which these theologians surround it, lead to a denunciation of all work on human institutions, of all efforts to humanize the world as vain? "No one would try to convert the world," writes Father Bouyer harshly, "unless he had first begun to love the world and all that is in the world"; that is to say, by first denying the Christian spirit that has been defined by St. John. As Christ did not pray for the world, the apostle must not dream of Christianizing the world, but only of regrouping and preparing as witnesses the children of God scattered throughout the world.

Many replies have been made to Karl Barth and to Father Bouyer. In the pages which follow we shall necessarily utilize some of these, but our primary concern shall be with certain basic ideas that will help us to arrive at a correct answer to this question.

**"Now there remains charity."** First of all, let us recall a point of dogma about which there can be no dispute among all

who acknowledge the realism of justification. No doubt, no one passes from a natural life to a supernatural life without a break, but this break takes place at baptism and not at death. No doubt, too, the one who is justified has as yet only a "promise" of the inheritance. His body must undergo a transformation, his terrestrial condition remains awaiting. He sees God only in a dark manner, as in a mirror, and when the face of Christ will be revealed for him, he will be despoiled of faith and hope, as of weapons that are no longer useful. But charity does remain and, under the transformation of the body and the unveiling of all being, preserves its continuity. Mystically dead and raised up again in baptism, I am certain that physical death can never separate me from the love of Christ. My share in eternal glory will only translate into luminous terms my share here below in charity. Certainly my life is hidden in God; nevertheless it has begun and it is not a creation—I am already a new creature—but the falling of a veil that shall make it appear what it truly is. While awaiting this revelation my supernatural life ceaselessly grows by prayer, by suffering, and especially by the exercise of fraternal charity.

Fraternal charity is more than a means for meriting an increase of supernatural life in each one of the faithful. It establishes vital bonds between them. As a result it is the whole Mystical Body which grows unto its fullness, and it is this Body which, at one and the same time, is being built up here on earth and is already established in heaven (Cf. Ephs. iv, 12-16; ii, 6). Whatever contributes to building up the Body is already entered in the eternal records, not only as a merit, a title to glory, but as a realization which is in itself imperishable. Charity remains. All authentic love, every social bond, created by charity, will survive at the Second Coming of Christ. The heavenly Jerusalem will be simply the Communion of Saints become conscious. Certainly it will come down from heaven, because all those who die in Christ are to be found in heaven and in heaven those who have been mystically raised up at baptism already live. But the bonds of love, which give the Body consistency, have been forged on earth. The heavenly city is not a substitute for the fraternal city, which in an invisible manner charity builds up here below; it simply brings it, completed, into the light.

Hence, the problem is not so much to define the relationship between the universe which will follow the Second Coming and

that which precedes it, but, within the latter, which is ours, to define the relationships existing between tasks called profane and the multiplication, the extension, the tightening of the bonds of charity. We must decide, one way or another, whether the desire, for example, to push back the inroads of hunger, war, suffering, death, or, in a more general way, the desire to engage in economic, social, political or scientific tasks seems foreign, not so much to our expectation of another world, but to the expansion of charity in this world.

**"All things work together unto good."** The example of Christ Himself is enough to give a basic answer. Distinctions may come later, but how is it possible to deny that the Founder of the kingdom of God fought against physical evil? His miracles fed the crowd, cured the sick, consoled the suffering. His directions to His disciples placed upon them the obligation to do the same. It is required of all that they relieve the needs of the poor, solace every form of distress. Jesus well knew that this attitude might bring about tragic misunderstandings. Yet as it seemed to Him that suffering was linked to the kingdom of Satan, the victory which He is to win over it announces and foreshadows the kingdom of God.

When Jesus gave to His followers the commandment to make their love concrete in mutual service, He gave them also the opportunity to increase their love. If the primitive community formed but one mind and one heart, it was because each placed his personal possessions at the disposition of all. One can question the economic value of such a system. It is enough for us to note that it manifested the conviction of the immediate disciples of Christ: that a particular temporal structure does aid the growth of charity. St. Paul understood this also. For him, the collection taken up for the saints of Jerusalem is not merely a gesture to conciliate his enemies, the judaisers. By establishing a certain "equality" (II Cor., viii, 14), it is a means of strengthening the unity of the Church, of giving to all a reason, not only of thanksgiving to God, but also for mutual esteem, gratitude, thoughtfulness (II Cor., ix, 12-14). One of the aims of work, assigned by St. Paul, is to give to all the means of assisting the needy (Eph., iv, 28).

If this principle is once admitted, does it not follow that the logic of charity will engage the Christian in all sorts of temporal



tasks? The development of the social and economic sciences has taught us that almsgiving represents a rudimentary form of assistance to the needy. Perhaps it will never be totally suppressed; nevertheless the development of a region, the opening up of new industries, a policy of immigration will accomplish the same thing on a much vaster scale, without in any way endangering human dignity. These enterprises must, of course, envisage as a final aim, not the increase of an abstract prosperity, but an equitable distribution of goods which will allow men of good will to free themselves from all jealousy and hate and live together as brothers under the eye of God.

Other domains will likewise call for similar applications of the gospel teaching. In His battle against sickness Christ used supernatural means. Yet the good Samaritan, cited as an example of practical charity, treated the wounds of the unfortunate man whom he encountered with common remedies, oil and wine. Is not the researcher who spends the labor of a lifetime to discover an antibiotic or a vaccine faithful to this humble example?

In general, can one not say that every effort voluntarily made by men in the service of their fellow men of itself tends to tighten the bonds of charity between them? This is true not only because, as St. Thomas frequently points out, and the papal encyclicals echo him in this, the exercise of virtue requires a minimum of human standing, but also because such service is an expression of love and of itself creates a relationship and calls for a return. Therefore no task will be really profane that can be looked upon as a service: not agriculture, industry, commerce, science, art, not even politics. For there is nothing in this world whose use cannot be legitimate, nothing which cannot aid men in loving their heavenly Father and living together with their brethren. As the offerings of the Corinthians and Phillippians to the poor of Jerusalem established Greeks and Jews in one Christian community, prospecting for a new mine, irrigation of waste land, lowering of frontiers, publication of a masterpiece can, by multiplying the exchange of services and the occasions for contacts, help men to build up the Body of Christ. In all things God works for the good of those who love Him (Cf. Romans, viii, 28). "All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (I Cor., iii, 22-23).

**The fact of sin.** We must admit, nevertheless, that over this world, so marvelously capable of manifesting charity, there

reigns Satan. This fact is affirmed by Christ Himself, speaking of "the Prince of this world," omitting to pray for the world (Cf. John, xii, 31; xiv, 30; xvi, 11; xvii, 9). As has been many times remarked, the ambiguity of this term "world" prevents us from drawing conclusions from the words of Jesus that are too pessimistic. Yet it is not without purpose that Jesus chose precisely this ambiguous word. Certainly He had no intention of denying the fundamental goodness of the work of His Father; He wished to denounce the intrusion into the very heart of this work of the power of sin which has destroyed its harmony. Both St. John and St. Paul echo the insistence of Christ: "... the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (I John, v, 19). "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but ... against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high" (Eph., vi, 12).

Spiritual realism must take into account such remarks as these. Father Bouyer is quite justified when he accuses us of not taking sin seriously, of seeing it merely as an error, or a weakness of a will that is otherwise excellent, when, in fact, it constitutes a clear, conscious, and irrevocable refusal of God. Even were we to suppose that no living man wills evil positively, there is a lucidly perverse will which paves the way for hate (the eternal result of every sin) by means of our egoism, our cowardice, our ineptitude. Do we not see painful and even disastrous misunderstandings arise among men of good-will—even among Christians passionately devoted to the same Christ—by what seems like a sort of fatality? Why then should we be astonished that human effort in the service of temporal tasks goes astray at times or becomes mired in material details, instead of reaching the kingdom of God?

Science, for example, which ought to enable man to lead a completely human life seems at the moment to be thrusting him toward an inhuman death. And if between two world wars it has granted to a few privileged ones a respite of comfort, for many this very comfort has become a trap into which, under the very weight of abundance, the best in them has become ensnared. Even the intellect, which according to the word of Gide, calls upon the complicity of the Devil to perfect its work, no longer is directed to love, but rather to self-complacency and to obscuring, even when bringing out their splendor, the transparency of things.

The world no longer opposes charity at work merely by the

weight of its inertia. It hates Christ, it hates the followers of Christ, with a hate that is sometimes muffled and sometimes violent, but always so constant that it constitutes for the Christian a criterion of his own fidelity: "But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John, xv, 19).

Certainly the "world" which places obstacles to the building up of the Body of Christ, is neither the physical world, impatiently awaiting its deliverance (Cf. Romans, viii, 20-22), nor the totality of men who dwell in it. Yet there is a spirit sufficiently subtle to maneuver wills which perhaps would want to be good, sufficiently powerful to foil continually the terrestrial realization of the kingdom of God. Without necessarily understanding each symbolic detail, a simple reading of the Apocalypse furnishes a frightening revelation of this demoniac power.

Must we draw from all this evidence a lesson of discouragement? Must we turn back and refuse all collaboration in profane tasks which a power stronger than ourselves always succeeds in drawing away from the ideal first envisaged? If science, by a fatality to which history itself testifies, always ends by furnishing more powerful weapons of hate, if increased production only exacerbates the egoism of some, if a higher standard of living nourishes among its privileged groups a practical materialism, if even among those, who at first wanted only to serve, the taste for action ends by suppressing a disinterested anxiety for the kingdom of God, would it not be better to sit back with folded arms than to collaborate with these evils while seeking unrealizable goals? Must we return to the position of the Tractarians: every human effort is futile—and perhaps wrong—which does not tend uniquely to compromise oneself for Christ against the world.

**The risk and the cross.** The intransigence of such a rejection of the world can be alluring. But such an attitude would involve a misunderstanding of one of the most constant laws of divine action: the willingness to run a risk. In the world of created liberties there is no good that is not followed, as by a shadow, by the danger of evil. The only complete assurance against evil would be inaction. Had God not created, were creatures to refrain from action, then surely evil would remain absent from the world—and likewise good. But God created because He willed the good, even if, in fact, evil also occurs. This is the mystery of the risk



that is accepted, vastly more disconcerting for us because God is not ignorant of the evil that may be involved. (Is not our optimism founded precisely in this, that God, knowing all the evil that is to happen, nevertheless has judged it worthwhile to permit it?) God ran a risk in creating the angels, God runs a risk in creating man. God runs a risk in calling them to become His children. Every prophet sent by God to the chosen people meant running a risk: the warnings uttered by the prophets might only harden their hearts (Isaiah, vi, 9-10; Ezekiel, ii, 7; iii, 7). Christ Himself was keenly conscious of the fact that His words created a tragic risk for His hearers: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have not sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin" (John, xv, 22). Every missionary who carries the gospel to a new people becomes in his turn an "odor of life" for whoever hears him, an "odor of death" for whoever rejects him (II Cor., ii, 16). Nevertheless the possibility that some may refuse does not excuse him from offering the grace: "Woe to me if I preach not the gospel" (I Cor., ix, 16).

The risk of seeing his temporal action deprived, by malice or ineptitude, of the spiritual achievement toward which it tends should never deter the Christian from taking such action, just as the possibility of giving the crowd a pretext for misunderstanding His mission did not deter Christ from feeding them when they were hungry (John, vi, 15, 26). We must ever remember that Someone stronger than Satan is at work in the world, and if the economy of salvation withholds total victory until the last day, advances on limited fronts are always possible. The same science which seems to be making war its special province, lends itself also to the works of peace. A higher standard of living can enable a people to overcome class conflicts. Let no one say: Such a fragile peace! Such limited social harmony! If only a few men, thanks to an hour of respite, succeed in loving one another better, something eternal has been accomplished on earth. The world may efface all traces of it; it remains inscribed in God, as an imperishable increase in the stature of Christ. A fairly humble accomplishment, you will say? Of course; yet perhaps those who are disdainful of helping the world realize what little it can, betray the fact that it is they who expect too much from the world. Would St. Paul, who urged his followers to pray for peace, judge harshly the effort of a statesman to prolong peace even for a little while?

Certainly not, unless he wished to incur the stinging reproach of St. James: "And if a brother or a sister be naked and in want of daily food, and one of you say to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' yet you do not give them what is necessary for the body, what does it profit?" (James, ii, 15-16).

Now if the effort he has made does as a matter of fact, either through the intervention of the Devil, or because of perverse wills, or on account of his own ineptitude, cause sin to abound, the Christian knows very well that grace can and does superabound (Romans v, 20). For the sinful world turning against him may nail him to the cross. And from every cross of Christ the blood of the victim flows as a baptism over the crucifiers. If, to put it more simply, the materialistic universe attempts to render more difficult the condition of the Christian, by that very fact it furnishes opportunities for a more perfect witness. Undoubtedly it will set traps into which the weak will fall. Yet by the same token it will offer to the saints opportunities for such heroism that they will merit the salvation of the weak. It will deny them success in which they might seek an unquiet rest. From their anguish at the sin of the world will rise acts of total confidence, of pure love, acts which (on the authority of St. John of the Cross) we may say are more valuable to the Church than exterior works, even though such acts at times push them into exterior works. In a word, Christians freed by failure from too great a confidence in their own powers will relive the experience of St. Paul: "In all things we suffer tribulation, but we are not distressed; we are sore pressed, but we are not destitute; we endure persecution, but we are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we do not perish" (II Cor., iv, 8-9). To the world they will be at once a living reproach of the Spirit and the sign of His power shining through their weakness. By the radiance of their lives, by the fruitfulness of their death they will gain at the end the success denied their temporal efforts. Just as those who crucified Christ furnished by their crime a means of redemption from it; so too the world that rejects the ardent charity of the Christian arouses, paradoxically, a more ardent charity.

Most likely the eschatological theologians will agree with these sentiments; but, they will ask, it is really necessary to make such efforts in the temporal order? If, as a matter of fact, salvation can come only from sacrifice, why make this detour before coming face to face with it.

**Failure and success.** One could say that respect for the order of divine providence demands it. But in order to come to the heart of the problem, we must hazard a new paradox. In a sense only involvement in the temporal order gives meaning to sacrifice. Jesus well knew that in the final analysis it would be by the cross and by a temporary failure of His human effort that He would save the world. Nonetheless He devoted all His intelligence, all His fervor in an effort to convince the crowd and to form His apostles. His death had neither meaning nor value—the agony in the garden shows this clearly enough—unless this was accepted, willed contrary to the whole impulse of life. The more complete this impulse, the stronger the love exhaled when broken upon the cross. And in its own way it would reveal its effectiveness: saved on Calvary, we also live by this preaching of Christ, which, if it had succeeded in convincing His enemies, would have rendered Calvary impossible.

The Christian therefore must live a paradox of passionately embracing every task, temporal or otherwise, which tends to realize some of the kingdom of God on earth, while knowing that his total realization is impossible, that even partial success is problematic. He will not hesitate because the humblest, the most fleeting accomplishment of true human fraternity—won at the end of a scientific, economic, cultural or social effort—is inscribed in eternity: is a joy forever. He will undertake this task without any scruples, precisely because the precariousness of the results will keep him from becoming complacent (of course, mortification must be employed whenever the assurance of success, the illusion of completion might seduce him). He will embrace his task without sadness, because any failure that menaces him can only substitute for the efficacy of action the greater fruitfulness of sacrifice, provided of course, striving with all his powers to succeed, he does not refuse to embrace the cross that always stands in the way.

Certainly it was not to any sterile attitude of waiting that St. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians; he wants them to engage in the service of their fellow men, while keeping themselves ever alert for the arrival of the Master (I Thess., v, 14; LL Thess., iii, 6-13). With ears attuned to every sound along the way, with hearts beating faster at the thought that they might herald the arrival of the Master, the Christian nevertheless works to perfect his task, not only awake but, as the gospel says, "doing" (Lk., xii, 43).



# Margaret Clement\*

## I

In Newgate prison ten Carthusian monks  
Stand upright, chained to posts, so straitly tied  
They cannot lie nor sit, condemned to starve  
And rot in their own filth. With iron bands  
Around their necks, great fetters on their legs,  
They bear the load of Henry's fiendish hate,  
Who had their prior Houghton disembowelled  
Alive with others of their house or cloth,  
Because they would not split the corps of Christ  
And make a tribal pope. The gaoler bribed,  
The gentle Margaret, foster-child of More,  
Enters the prison in a milkmaid's guise,  
Carrying pails of food. Because their hands  
Are fast in chains she puts it in their mouths.  
Before she leaves she cleans them as she can.  
Thus many days she comes until at last  
The gaoler frightened, will not let her in.  
She tries to reach them through the roof but fails,  
And so they die, nine of the ten. The tenth,  
Firm after five more years, unfettered since  
But prisoned in the Tower, dies by the knife,  
As Houghton, Laurence, Webster died before,  
The protomartyrs of the Charterhouse,  
Who mapped the road to Tyburn and to God.

## II

Sir Thomas More is thirty-five years dead  
(Merry in heaven). Margaret Clement and John,

---

\* Margaret Gigs Clement, foster-daughter of St. Thomas More, not to be confused with Margaret More Roper, his blood-daughter.

Her husband, also of More's house and school,  
Are long in exile. Death is waiting near—  
And others. Margaret summons John to say:  
The Reverend Fathers of the Charterhouse,  
Whom she relieved in prison, stand about the bed  
And call on her to come away with them,  
And so, she tells him, she must now depart,  
Because they do expect her. Thus the end.

### III

O Henry kills the men that read  
    And flays the men that pray  
But merry are the men that bleed  
    To wake in heaven's day.

The women that before the cross  
    Embrace the mystic sword  
Remember naught of pain or loss  
    When they have seen the Lord.

Compassion is of woman good  
    As honor is of man  
And both are boned with fortitude  
    In God's resplendent plan.

So man and woman may we go  
    In faith and love to God  
As bravely as they bore the blow  
    Of brutal Henry's rod.

For there is honor yet to keep  
    And pity still to give.  
We must not with the coward sleep  
    But die that we may live.

—J. E. P. BUTLER

# *An Inquiry on Confession and Spiritual Direction*

by DOROTHY DOHEN

*No issue on the priest and the layman  
would be complete without  
a discussion of the priest's vital role  
as confessor and director.*

"I went to confession in the Chicago Loop. At the end, the priest said, 'That's a very good confession. Do you go to Communion often?'

"Of course, they must get some bad ones in the Loop and the one before me took a long time. And I had no serious or grave matters. I'm happy to have provided the priest with a breather, but I had indicated in my confession that I was not satisfied with my prayer life and I had indicated that my mental attitude was affecting my relationship with my family.

"If I had been asked, I'd have answered that I'm not satisfied with my present progress. It's not a question of grave sins—I assume that most (sincere Christians) try to avoid them. We are interested in perfection, contemplation, mental prayer, practice of the presence of God, how to overcome the obstacles of our nature to close union with Christ. We don't want pats on the back, but more confessors should recognize our thirst for spiritual help and direction. It is discouraging to get a brief resumé Saturday night of the priest's Sunday sermon—very good perhaps, but no personal application to one's problems."

Thus a married man wrote to us in response to a rather informal "inquiry" we have been making among active, interested laymen and women.

In the past decade, accompanying a newly-awakened sense of apostolate among lay people, there has been a growing realization of the necessity of a deep interior life for fruitful external action.



The interest in spirituality for lay people has shown a marked increase. The number of lay people who read spiritual books is no longer minute; the number who are seriously striving for sanctity—while perhaps small in proportion to the total number of Catholics—still is an encouraging indication of the truth of the statement that it is evident God wills this to be an age of lay saints.

Since one of the traditional helps within the Church to the attainment of sanctity is spiritual direction, it is not surprising that lay people interested in becoming holy are turning toward it in increasing numbers. The question of spiritual direction for lay people has been battled around now for a number of years among those participating in some form or other of the lay apostolate. Among some there has been the feeling that direction is for "nuns"—for those who are not interested in living a genuine Christian *lay* life, but a monastic or religious life in lay clothing. Consequently they have rejected it completely as having no part in a contemporary spirituality for lay people. Another school of thought, in the opposite extreme, has tended to transpose spiritual direction from a religious or monastic setting without making any of the necessary adaptations to lay life. Then those who want to use all possible means to advance in union with God sometimes wonder: Will spiritual direction deprive me of my responsibility for temporal affairs? Does spiritual direction negate the idea of lay initiative?

This article does not pretend to be a conclusive answer to these questions; neither does it pretend to discuss exhaustively the purpose of spiritual direction and the part it can play in the lay person's life. Rather, through discussing some of the points brought out in response to our questionnaire on the lay person's attitudes toward confession and spiritual direction, we hope to clarify the matter somewhat for interested lay Catholics, as well as to provide some indication to priests of the aspirations and difficulties of laymen. Our aim is to state the problem so that it may be solved by wiser heads than ours.

**Positive advice in the confessional.** Among the lay people we consulted, all seem to wish that the priest besides listening to sins and giving absolution in confession, would give some positive advice. While a number report that priests do give some advice, one replies: "Only at downtown churches in large cities—parish priests not at all." Others say that the advice is too general.

Apparently they do not know how to ask for it, and apparently, too, the confessor does not get enough information from the penitent on which to base his advice. As one of the men replying remarked: "It would probably have to start by the priest encouraging a further statement of sins and occasions of sins and my difficulties than the bare recital of categories."

Those lay people who feel reluctant to ask for advice and sense a lack of interest on the part of the confessor, usually blame it on the fact that he is pressed for time, that there is a long line of penitents waiting to be heard. One woman writes: "Some priests seem too anxious to get on to the next—like supermarket checkers." Another person remarks that priests "usually give advice only when asked," and another writes, "They seem quite surprised if you ask for it." Someone else: "Mostly they seem too overworked and I pray for a solution instead." Another person explains his reluctance to bring up a problem in confession: "I'm not sure they (confessors) grasp the circumstances in a lay person's life which sometimes create problems."

One girl said that she didn't think the priests were to blame for hurrying with confessions. "How people glare at the penitent who's taken a long time and kept them waiting! Sometimes the priest who does give people time to discuss their problems, far from being appreciated by the parishioners, is avoided. 'I wouldn't go to confession to Father So-and-So; he takes too long.'"

It is probably safe to say that sensible people don't expect the priest to listen to a long recital of their problems and spiritual aspirations at confession on Christmas Eve and Holy Saturday. But what about the feeling of pressure and insufficient time on ordinary days? Could it be that most of us—priests as well as lay people—are such unconscious slaves to the American ideal of "fast, efficient service" that we are unwilling to take time?

And to give a woman the last word: "I feel the average priest has as much to learn about direction as the average Catholic has about using direction intelligently. We are as unmoved by routine confessions as we are by routine sermons. However, I find the Holy Ghost frequently inspires even through ideas I've heard a score or more times in the confessional or from the pulpit. I still feel, however, that if priests gave themselves more generously and intelligently to each soul in the confessional, souls would go more frequently to the Sacraments."

**Going to the rectory.** To the question as to whether they feel free to go to the rectory to discuss a problem, while most people said "yes," there were some qualifications as to what rectory, what priest, and what problem. "An exterior problem—yes. But one concerning aspirations toward growth in holiness is more difficult. He (the priest) seems to be so swamped with 'real' problems of parishioners who need emergency treatment both temporally and spiritually—people in need of jobs or housing or food, fallen-away souls, people with problem-relatives, people with habits that are social as well as spiritual handicaps. . . . Perhaps I am mistaken, but I have always been afraid to ask my priest for spiritual guidance, for it seems to me that, while my problems seem real enough to me, in his eyes they may appear to be a luxury to be indulged in only by an idle, introspective soul." About discussing a problem at the rectory another person writes: "Not a personal problem—I wouldn't mind going to ask about a question of fact, arrange for a wedding or baptism, etc. I'd rather ask about personal matters in the confessional."

The traditional bugaboo of the unfriendly housekeeper appears in one response as the impediment to going to the rectory to discuss a problem. We should probably remind our readers here that our inquiry was answered by about fifty active, in a sense 'sophisticated,' Catholics who have quite a bit of contact with priests, many of them belonging to Catholic Action groups with priest-chaplains. Hence the practically unanimous willingness to go to the rectory to discuss a problem cannot be interpreted as being the reaction of the typical "average" Catholic. What that is we don't pretend to say.

**The purpose of spiritual direction.** There was a girl once who decided she wanted to become holy and had become convinced of the need for spiritual direction. She approached a priest on the subject; he at once inquired if she wanted to enter the convent, she replied "no." He then asked questions to ascertain if she were having immoral relations with a man, and again she replied "no." And that terminated the interview.

Fortunately, the day when spiritual direction was thought to be needed only by those with a religious vocation or an acute moral problem is over, or practically so. There are still lay people who view direction as something only for those with an acute problem—either an alcoholic husband, or divorced parents—or who are



themselves problems—either neurotic or intensely scrupulous. But we are happy to say that this “problem-centered” idea of spiritual direction, with the director being the stand-in for the guidance counsellor or psychiatrist, is almost completely missing in the answers we received. Several people put the purpose of spiritual direction quite simply: “To help a person become holy.” “To help us to become saints.” “To give personalized spiritual guidance based on a knowledge of the person.” “To guide us on the way to sanctity.” “Helping you to find out what God’s will is for you; that is, in what specific way you are to work toward sanctity.”

Someone else spelled it out: “To help us orient our lives so that we keep an ever clearer view of ‘where did we come from,’ ‘where we are going’ in relation to God, and to help us evaluate the means to Him—and where we’re at. . . . We get into a rut awfully easily. Daily routine of prayer as well as work becomes automatic. If we’re to advance in holiness, such assistance should be very valuable.” And another person writes that the purpose of direction is “to help one become more pleasing to God. To help one discover what His will is in one’s particular case. To give one the spiritual exercises appropriate to one’s stage of development, to strengthen moral fiber, awaken desire—above all, to teach one how to pray, and help one overcome obstacles to prayer.” Another answers: “To make people realize, and help them fulfill, their potentialities of sanctity—to make the weak strong, and the strong stronger. And to prevent the dangers of a subjective approach which might lead to breakdown, fanaticism, discouragement, etc.”

**Need for a director.** The fact that “no one should try to be his own judge, teacher or doctor,” in other words, that “no one can be completely objective about himself,” is given repeatedly as the reason a lay person needs a director. “It is a rare man who can advise himself.” “No one can direct himself, and if everyone is called to sanctity all need some direction.”

One woman writes: “Lay people have to become holy and should strive for perfection as much as a religious. In fact, the problems of a lay person’s life are so complex he has an especial need for a spiritual director. Otherwise religion can continue to be a separate and unintegrated part of his life and a mediocre one at that.” And a man writes that one needs a spiritual director “to help him stand back and look at the crowded scene of everyday life through God’s eyes.”

One person qualifies the need for a spiritual director as "not an absolute need, but certainly a big help." And another remarks: The wrong director might be more harmful than none. The Little Flower managed without one. . . . Some lay persons need a director; not necessary for others. . . . I think, however, that a spiritual director might deter me from laziness." And someone else replies: "Perhaps some strong souls can advance without one. . . . I need one."

As to whether a lay person needs a director, someone else answers: "Oftentimes, not always. Impossible mathematically for forty-five thousand priests to have thirty million people for special direction." Needless to say it is an eventuality for the far-off future that thirty million people would *want* spiritual direction! Furthermore, as a priest once remarked, if there were more people getting spiritual direction there would be more priestly vocations.

It is true that "having a special director may merely encourage one's pride," but it is equally true that refusing to accept direction—when good direction is available—can also be a sign of pride. "Healthy independence" can be a good thing, but not when it motivates us to refuse the help of priests whom God has given us as dispensers of His grace.

**Dependence on directors.** And that brings us to a point that was mentioned several times in the replies to our questionnaire. That is, the danger that the person getting direction will misuse it, and make of direction a spiritual crutch instead of learning to walk on his own two feet. "There is a tremendous danger of over-dependence, to be guarded against both for the sake of the layman and the priest."

One person comments: "In my experience too many directed people use their directors as props rather than guides, and it's 'Father this' and 'Father that.' This tends to disgust more self-reliant people, and they think it's only weaklings who fly to directors, and they therefore miss something they could be profiting from."

We think that this last remark is unfortunately true. Many people are turned away from spiritual direction because they see over-dependent people using direction as a means of escaping responsibility, of avoiding the necessity of using initiative, and of getting out of making their own decisions. The self-reliant then think that direction implies "requiring advice for every little step,"

when, quite the contrary, the purpose of direction is to enable the person receiving it to become spiritually adult. To be able to take responsibility, to be able to decide in the million and one tiny circumstances of everyday living what action would be according to the mind of Christ, to obey promptly the inspirations of the Holy Spirit—a lay person must grow in spiritual and emotional maturity. A good director doesn't enslave the person he directs; rather he helps him to develop his own prudence. As Abbot Marmion put it: "The purpose of direction is to enable the soul to do without direction." Or, in other words, to get to that state of perfection for which, as St. John of the Cross says, there is no law, for it is above all law, and all that remains is love.

But, needless to say, the freedom of love implies much mortification, and a complete absence of self-will. This is virtually impossible to achieve by oneself. "Most people don't persevere in self-piloted programs of holiness." That is why good spiritual direction can be of invaluable assistance.

Any good thing, of course, can be abused. The daily reception of Holy Communion can become a routine act; yet no one—since St. Pius X—would consider advising anyone against receiving daily. Some daily communicants appear less holy than their brothers who stay in bed in the mornings, and obviously some people who are receiving regular direction appear a lot less holy than some who receive none. But all things considered, while direction places a tremendous burden on the priest who gives it, and while it can be misused, it still remains a wonderful help for those called to holiness. Getting direction does not imply a sudden transformation; we can hardly expect that overnight the dependent personality will become normally independent, nor that the person taking direction will immediately lose all his faults. Direction is for sinners—for sinners who want to become saints.

**Direction for married people.** Two comments from people who answered our questionnaire are especially interesting. A rather rueful one, from a man who says he doesn't have a director but feels the need of one, is: "I think priests are much quicker to make regular penitents out of women, and vice versa."

The other, from a newly-married woman who had a director, is: "It's interesting to note that among lay people almost no men have directors, and *loads* of women do! This is, of course, a basic difference between men and women—women like direction and



men don't. I think, too, that a lot of unmarried women tend to sublimate their desire (conscious or unconscious) for the authority of a husband over them by way of submitting to the authority of the director."

It does seem true that women, "the devout female sex," do tend to lap up direction. Maybe it's just because they like to talk! Maybe too it's because they—more than men—seem unhappy with our present civilization; certainly it is a fact that more women than men are engaged in efforts for a Christian renewal. It is no wonder that they see the necessity of a personal renewal as well.

But whatever—the situation does create problems, especially when a girl who has had a director marries and her husband objects to her continuing to have a regular confessor or director. However, before we dismiss the husband's objection as masculine authoritarianism, we might recall the life of Blessed Anna Maria Taigi, whose husband suffered from her director's imprudence. The poor man finally put his foot down when the director decided that Anna Maria should wear the habit of the third order. Very properly her husband refused to walk on the street with a wife who looked like a nun!

This, of course, is a far-fetched occurrence. An imprudent director could be a handicap to a marriage, but this still does not nullify the wife's right to personal direction. Recently some people have suggested that the husband should be the only one to have a director and then he in turn should direct his wife. They feel that as "head of the family" this is within his province. However, this notion has Protestant rather than Catholic antecedents. The Church has always held that, while a woman as wife is subject to her husband's authority within the family, as a person she is entitled to all the benefits and blessings of the Church—one of which is the right to personal spiritual direction.

The husband who objects to his wife's getting direction on the grounds that he cannot bear that she should tell anyone else anything that he (the husband) would not know, is being rather immature. In the first place, the priest has a supernatural function for which no one else—husband included—can be the substitute. In the second place, however close a husband and wife are in marriage—"one in mind, one in heart, one in affection"—it is nonetheless true that each of them, in the ultimate sense, is condemned or destined (whichever way you view it) to be solitary before

God. It is infantile to be jealous of Him.

We should report that everyone who answered our inquiry indicated that married persons as well as anyone else should have a director. Several said that husband and wife should have the same director, one person adding, "and they should consult him together, reserving the confessional for what they consider personal." Obviously there are advantages to their having the same director—especially since no one lives a spiritual life in a vacuum, and many matters which they would discuss with a director would affect their common life. (Maisie Ward brings out this point well in *Be Not Solicitous* when she gives the example of a couple each of whom consulted a priest—different ones—about whether they should practice Rhythm; both getting the answer they wanted!)

One person replying said that he thought the husband and wife should have different directors; what the thinking was behind this statement he did not go on to explain. Despite all the advantages derived from having the same director, husband and wife would certainly have the freedom to choose different ones. Even though a priest might be well-qualified to be a director, not every soul is going to find him approachable. One husband writes: "My wife envies my having such a forthright and alert-to-me director. I wish for her such a blessing as I enjoy. I pray for her that her need will be filled soon."

In this question of the choice of a director there must be great latitude. The need for priests schooled in the spiritual life who, at the same time, have an understanding of the practical realities of marriage and family life is very great. One husband puts it: "Married people particularly need their own brand of spiritual direction—directors familiar with marital problems and the spirituality adapted to the married life. Of course, this entire matter is complicated by large parishes and insufficient clergy. However, once a way is found of meeting the needs of married people, a real revolution could take place, and the Church would begin to have the effect on the world that Christ designed it to have."

**Difficulty of getting a director.** Most people who have a director report that they had some difficulty getting him—though there are a few lucky ones who say, "*He found me* before I even knew what a director was." Not in the sense, obviously, that the particular priest in question went out looking for business, but in

in this sense, very probably, that some way or other—in confession or through a retreat or through their Catholic Action group—he awakened them to the realities of the spiritual life. There are quite a variety of ways of finding a good director—or of being found by him!

One person who reports no difficulty in finding a director writes: "I just asked one of the parish priests. I think he was pretty startled and doesn't know quite how to go about it (which is presumptuous of me?) but does the best he can. . . . I have only met one parish priest who seemed to know what it meant to be a spiritual director and took seriously all my questions about my soul, prayer, etc. I have been put off with 'Well—we can't all be saints,' and '*These* aren't serious sins!' etc. My impression is that most of them, when you mention any difficulty with prayer think you've got hold of some highfalutin reading and are imagining you are on the verge of ecstasies, visions, and so on. They seem to be uneasy with anything but nice, concrete problems like this one or that, and even when you confess things like a sin against charity (talking about someone when you could have kept still) they never remind you to see Christ in the other person, or speak of love, but just say 'And are you sorry?'"

One man answered that he found getting a director: "Most difficult. One has to hunt around a long time before finding a priest one likes, or who won't be transferred too soon after finding him."

Spiritual direction is the "art of arts" and a good director is not easily found. However, we think that as more priests and seminarians become interested in the lay apostolate there will be more priests qualified to give direction to lay people, who seek in their director a combination of qualities: personal holiness, a sound knowledge of the spiritual life, and a good understanding of the circumstances of lay life. There are priests, it seems, well-trained in spiritual theology who fail as directors for lay people because they don't have an adequate understanding of lay life. Conversely, there are those who are sympathetic to the problems and aspirations of lay people who don't know enough about the nature and value of the spiritual life to give good direction. What are wanted are priests who combine knowledge of both theory and practice.

**What to discuss with him.** A man writes us: "Probably a spiritual director is necessary, but since I have not found any really

satisfactory, and *don't know what questions to ask anyway*, I have used the dangerous approach (limping along and going up blind alleys) of trying to find the answers to the problems by my own investigations."

The problem of what to discuss with the director bothers a good many people. While most of those replying to our inquiry who have a spiritual director said they know what to discuss with him, a few indicated that it took them a long time to find out. Only two persons gave a specific answer as to what to discuss, one writing: "Prayer, large decisions, spiritual problems, such as poverty, the virtues." The other: "Everything concerning my spiritual and moral behavior; important decisions that may have to be made, etc."

We have taken for granted throughout this article, as the reader has probably realized, that direction can be given inside or outside confession. The priest as confessor is primarily concerned with sin; secondarily with the penitent's positive growth in holiness. Outside the confessional the order would be reversed, but still, the director would have to deal with sins and faults as obstacles to be removed if the person receiving direction is to reach union with God. Consequently, the person would be expected to bring up for discussion moral problems, temptations, and those things which he sees as stumbling blocks in the path of virtue. These provide the negative material of direction. In a positive vein, prayer (which is the measure of one's degree of spiritual life), penance, and spiritual reading (which gives one the "material" for prayer) are matters to be discussed with the director. Large decisions (as our correspondent indicated) are certainly to be discussed, as one's spiritual life must not be separated from one's whole life. Such decisions would include, of course, a choice of vocation. However, let it be noted, it's not usually the province of the director to *make* the decision. Rather he is to clarify for the person the principles involved. The director is the external check on the interior promptings of the Holy Spirit. His duty is not usually to *initiate*, but to prevent the person from going astray.

To give a practical example, take a man who's thinking of buying a car. It's not up to the director to decide on the relative merits of a Ford or a Chevrolet. The man might consult the director—if he's confused about it—as to whether it would be a virtuous act for him to buy a car at all. Not that the director is an



answer man, but that he could give an objective view of the individual case (Does the wife want a washing machine instead? Does the husband need a car?) and clarify the principles involved (practice of the spirit of poverty, right use of material things, etc.) so that the man *himself* can reach a proper decision.

The frequency of direction, as well as the matters to be discussed, will vary from person to person. The director in general works with what the person gives him. Beginners in the spiritual life, those involved in choosing a vocation, or in some external crisis or great interior trial, may need more lengthy and more frequent direction than those whose life at present has a greater degree of stability. On the whole, spiritual direction is a completely unexciting experience. People can't expect miracles from it; neither should they be discouraged if they don't see any immediate results. Like everything else in the Christian life they must plug along at it.

**Conclusion.** It seems evident that most of those replying to our inquiry realize that not sanctity, but *the desire for sanctity*, is the necessary qualification to have a spiritual director; that such direction is one of the normal means to grow in union with God; that some direction is a relative necessity. Much as they have encouraged direction and pointed out its advantages, spiritual writers have never insisted that it is *absolutely* necessary for holiness. Obviously there are circumstances which prevent people from having access to spiritual direction, and needless to say the Holy Spirit does not cease His workings on that account.

But good spiritual direction is a gift for which we should never cease to thank God. And a good spiritual director is a blessing for which we can certainly ask Him.



#### WHITHER REPENTENCE?

When I have said my penance  
And into the street I peer,  
I know where I have been—  
But where do I go from here?

# Sunday Sermons

by SUSAN CANDLE

*What does the layman need to hear from the pulpit? How vital is the Sunday sermon in the formation of a mature Catholic laity?*

"Now don't get me wrong. I'm a good Catholic, but . . ."

That has a familiar ring. There are laymen who complain—call it that—about the clergy, but not for the *sake* of complaining. They are not disposed to discuss whether Father says Mass too fast or whether his manner is too abrupt. They may not know in so many words that the priest is mediator between man and God and *that* is why he is so important, but they know he *is* important. They cannot be born or die in the Church without him and whether or not his personality suits them to a T, he is a priest and, therefore, deserving of their respect.

The difference between their complaints and those of the professional cranks is that they have important things to say. They are trying to say they want to be led to a deeper understanding of the faith and they know Father can help them—if only they could figure out how to tell him. Either they are unable to make him understand they have such a need, or the few attempts they have made have not been taken seriously.

This article has not the intention of being critical. It is an attempt by a layman to set down the spoken needs of other laymen heard hundreds of times, but rarely spoken to their priests.

If they do not tell their priests, why not? Many are too timid. They are afraid they ought to know more and are ashamed to admit they don't. Some have tried but have been so clumsy that their overtures have been gently dismissed as meddling in things which are over their heads and could only lead to trouble. Confessionals are few and chosen, it is implied, and theologians are not made in ten easy lessons. Still others have been told they have all that is necessary: the faith, the Mass, the Sacraments, good will, love of God. If they attend to these, what more do they think is necessary?

It is true no more is necessary to save one's soul. But the complaint of the layman who asks for more (and does not know how to word it because he does not know what he is asking *for*) is that he may have all this but there must be something more to using it.

And for most adult Catholics (well-informed or otherwise) the main contact with the teaching Church is the Sunday sermon.

**What would laymen like to hear in a sermon,** the only obligatory instruction for most Catholics after Confirmation?

"I don't know, exactly—but things that tie in more with daily life. How to live right. Something like that."

"I want to hear something about me. Where do I fit in?"

"All I know is that I want to hear more than I'm hearing. I've heard the same things all my life. Go to Mass. Go to the Sacraments. Keep the Commandments. It's the true Church. I know—and I've never questioned. But how is it some people can get excited about religion and I can't? Are you born that way, or can you get that way?"

They seek a starting point from which to assemble all the knowledge they have, all the Catholic things they do—and they want to add to it something they are sure exists but they do not know what it is. Instinctively they sense that whatever it is, it is *very personal*.

By themselves, they seek it in many ways. They listen carefully to all sermons, having been told that every sermon has something of value in it. And they usually do find something of value and try to use it. But still it does not light up the whole of the faith for them; only parts of it.

They take seriously the exhortation to become "informed Catholics," read the Question and Answer columns of their Catholic periodicals, and scan the pamphlet racks for information on things about which their non-Catholic friends might question them. And they do qualify as fairly well-informed Catholics, able to defend the Church's stand on birth control, explain the veneration of Mary, correct misunderstandings about indulgences, "pay" for Masses, and so forth. But when they are hashing it out among themselves all over again, they will say the same old thing: "I know nothing."

Most of all, they are enormously interested in the saints. But even when they seek clues here, they soon find themselves juggling what is imitable with what is inimitable and even though they

would like to try imitating the saints, they will reach an impasse with something like "How can you imitate a saint who slept on broken glass?" Does God expect that of *them*? And they usually decide that the saints must have been born that way.

**What's it all about?** Their constantly repeated "I know nothing" means: I know a lot of things about the Church and what she teaches but I don't know what she *is*. And I don't know what I am in relation to her. And until I do, I can't say I really know what it means to be a Catholic."

The things they want to know, it is true, are things they have known all their lives. They know until they could recite it in their sleep that the soul is the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, but they don't know it at all. This phrase has been familiar to Catholics from childhood and catechism. But ask them what it means. It means something vague about the spirit of God's love being with us always; or it means something about the union of Christ and the soul at Communion. Doesn't it?

It does *not* mean to them the indwelling of the Holy Trinity: the first and most important thing about "me."

"Do you mean to tell me that I have had the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost *present in me* whenever I have been in the state of grace—and *never knew it*?"

**God and me.** Learning this means the difference between being a spectator and being the pivot of the whole affair, because this is *why* the whole affair. The Redemption, the Church, the Mass, the Sacraments—everything, begins with "me" held in the mind of God before time and loved into being in order to share His life. This is the perfect measure of how we are loved, and being loved like this—it is pitiable not to know it!

Someone has said: "It is enough for me to know Christ died on the cross for my sins. I know by that how much He loves me." That is so poignantly true. The cross is more than enough to convince us of how we are loved. But Christ, from the cross, did more than just "set things right for us" with His Father, and open the gates of heaven. He restored to "me" the unbelievable intimacy shared between God and Adam, before it was lost by sin; that state of being in which Adam shared God's life. That is the *state of grace*: living God's life here, now.

Perhaps many priests assume their people understand that this is what is meant by the state of grace. Maybe that is why it



so rarely explained. But to most laymen the state of grace means only the opposite of the state of mortal sin. It is being clean, as compared with being unclean. It is pleasing to God. A good Catholic tries with all his strength to remain in the state of grace, but as one woman said: "Until I understood about the indwelling of the Trinity, I never knew *what to do* with the state of grace."

One group of laymen, told by their priest that the way to the greater knowledge they sought was a study of the gospels in discussion groups, said privately among themselves: "Maybe. But we hear the gospels every Sunday. I want something more specific. Something that applies to me."

They would never have said this to their priest, because it would sound like they thought Christ's teaching in the gospels did not apply to them, when of course they know it does. But it is easy to see their point of view. Father, recommending the gospels, understood the thing they sought could be found there. They, however, coming upon it: "If anyone love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and *we will come to him and make our abode with him*, would not in their wildest imaginings discover what is really meant. Most laymen do not dream He meant this *literally*. Such a little omission (but hardly little!) makes such a vast difference: the difference between seeing the gospels as a fire which would kindle them, and seeing them as that "we hear every Sunday."

**The key.** That God is present in the soul in the state of grace is the key to "how to live right," to "where I fit in," to all things they want to know. It governs everything: my behavior, my attitude toward my neighbor (whose value is suddenly transformed), my prejudices, how I bear injustice, accept joy, sanctify little things, to vocation, service, work, play, thinking, sex, life, death—everything. It means my soul is holy, and my body; that I am *supposed* to be holy—what else, when I bear this treasure in me?

The woman who said at last she knew what to do with the state of grace continued: "Now that I know, it makes such a difference. I don't lose my temper with the children half as much. Maybe one day not at all. I stop now, and remember God in my soul, and remember grace—and I pray for patience."

Now many things begin to fall into place. Like St. Paul's "of ourselves, we have no sufficiency." We cannot even know the

prompting to do good unless grace prompts it. And now—to know that Christ, the source of grace, is within us! God in me—loving me, eager to move me if only I will ask. *This* explains the saints, not fortitude, or genius, or virtue alone, but turning inward to God to ask not only for the grace *to do*, but the grace to know *what* to do. This puts sleeping on broken glass where it belongs; one of the responses to grace by a particular saint, but not necessarily a policy for all saints.

**Aiming at the majority.** It is easy to understand that some priests might think their people would not be interested in knowing all this. Outwardly, the average parish does not give the impression of being on fire with the need for it. One priest, teaching this doctrine to a penitente, was asked: "But why don't you preach this?" He replied: "You don't think I could talk this way to *all* the people, do you? They wouldn't get it. You can't preach at the minority only. You have to aim at the majority. You know what they say in the advertising business: you have to aim at a mean intellectual level of twelve years."

The advertising business has done a lot of damage with this dictum about the twelve-year-old mentality of the average American. (Also, incidentally, vastly underrated twelve-year olds—but that is neither here nor there.) Just because so many Americans are content with fare for twelve-year-olds does not prove they would not "go for" anything higher. Anyway, there is no adequate comparison here. There is in all men a need for divine truth. They were made for it. And baptism, with the infused virtues faith, hope and charity and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, perfects the soul for receiving it. The intellect must rate below sanctifying grace. Even so, the mind of the "average" American is able to juggle about an amazing variety of things, like daily batting averages, popular presentations of jet propulsion, atomic power, psychosomatic medicine and many more. *God is more interesting than these*, but only when one is helped to see it. In an age when everyone is interested in the speed of flight and the speed of sound, it is even more electrifying to discover that God exists out of time.

**They cannot reach "the maximum of love with the minimum of knowledge."** Most "well-informed" Catholics cannot prove the existence of God beyond saying there is evidence of His hand in nature. "And I simply believe—that's all." One garden variety Catholic, digging to find if there wasn't more to be said,

at an end to a long-standing discussion with an engineer by citing God as First Cause. Not only is learning these things important because Catholics must be able to defend their belief with intelligence and dignity, but because it is the beginning of being really *interested* in God, and the end of it is loving Him even more.

The Mystical Body is another thing they want to know about. This Mystical Body doesn't really mean *body*, does it? Isn't it more of a figure of speech, like vine and branches? I recall Christ saying He was the vine and we the branches, but I don't recall His saying we were part of His Body."

He said more than that. "And the glory that thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me; that they may be perfected in unity." To most laymen this is just a jumble of words. St. Paul made it clear in his explanation of the Mystical Body, and he wasn't writing for college graduates alone. Laymen who can strip down a motor and put it back together again can understand the relation of whole to parts.

**Importance of sermons.** Through the liturgical apostolate many have learned the meaning of the Mass, the Mystical Body, the role of the member after he leaves Mass to go home or to work to continue living the Christ life which flows into him from the Head of the Body. But most have not. They are not great readers, nor buyers of books. They can only learn it from sermons. One woman said: "My ignorance of the meaning of the Mass was pathetic. All the years of going to Mass, I had never heard it explained in terms of the Mystical Body, my part in it. To learn that I am *part of Christ* in the Church nearly knocked me over."

**Vocation of the laity.** When laymen are on fire at last, it is they who can often jar the apathy of the others. Not many will fancy themselves full-blown theologians, or "try to take over the parish." They don't even want to. But they can be the leaven in the parish. Once they learn the things they want to know so badly, they will talk about them in their neighbor's language. They won't be able to help it. And they will begin to understand the vocation of the members of the Body—the lay apostolate. It is every man sharing Christ's life and knowing it, telling the good news to the ones who don't. It is lots more, but this they will learn as they go along.

Grace works. It takes only a little yeast to raise a dough.

## Book Reviews

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRISTIAN LIFE  
by Père Gardeil, O.P.  
Herder, \$2.50

This is not a book from the hand that gave us *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the*

*Dominican Saints*—first hand, that is. This book has grown from notes taken by a religious during the course of a retreat given by Père Gardeil.

The retreat is aimed at religious; however, the lay man and woman whether directly engaged in apostolic work or not, will find much in these few pages to nourish their life in Christ and, best of all, to encourage them toward making their submission and abandonment to the Holy Spirit ever more perfect. "There is no question of extraordinary phenomena or airy spiritual ways: surely the Holy Spirit will lead us higher since He Himself will come to our aid in the suppression of evil tendencies, impatience, discouragement, distraction at prayer, etc. . . . under His inspiration we are going to review all the acts of ordinary life; only our point of view will be changed . . . the subject matter . . . is exactly the same for the gifts . . . as . . . for the exercise of the virtues; it is the mode of operation which differs . . . instead of acting on our own initiative, we are instruments, not masters; and *this remains no less the one and only Christian life, and therefore the one and only religious life*" (italics ours).

This book is most successful in making us examine our conscience on daily duties, excite contrition and elicit the all important purpose of amendment, sending us off with hope renewed, our sails set to catch the Wind Who is the Spirit. And all through the work the attractions of the virtues in their living relations as St. Thomas conceives them are woven into the author's words and examples.

Here he speaks on Christian courage and the gift of fortitude: "When we have lifted up our desires, then we must labor to see that each day our activities too are set at the same level. To fulfill our duties as Christians the duties of our daily life, we must get down to them vigorously . . . faced with the task, it needs a courageous soul to engage in it and not be rebuffed, to begin at the beginning and pursue it vigorously to the end. To take on the task of being a Christian, to apply ourselves to each and everything according to the rule of our conscience; this requires a great virtue . . . there is no task accomplished that is not the fruit of courage spent without count."

Compare this on the corresponding beatitudes, "Blessed are they who hunger . . .", in which gifts and beatitudes are integrated with the Sacraments: "hunger and thirst for penance; this comes to us straight from the Cross. Every time we approach this Sacrament we stand before the Cross and from its height it is Our Lord Who, by the priest's hand, imparts the food of a special strength against sin.

"Hunger and thirst for the Mass, wherein we have the real presence of Our Lord immolated: what food to nourish holiness in us. Hunger



thirst for the Mass which concludes by our receiving into the tabernacle of our body that Bread, the victim of Calvary, burning with the Son of God's own acts of love."

This is not a definitive book on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is not a theological treatise. It is, one might say, a book of practical mysticism. The treatment of the gifts of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, together with the corresponding beatitudes of tears, pure hearts, and peace-makers, is a little exposition of contemplation and the three ways. The gift of counsel takes on deeper significance and greater clarity with Père Gardeil's words, while the chapters on the beatitude of poverty and the gift of piety are especially enjoyable. Père Gardeil finds beautiful expression of this latter gift in fraternal charity.

The final chapter on spiritual progress seems regrettably short, since the whole book on that subject in Père Gardeil's words would be very profitable. We could regret that we do not have it, but the good father leaves us with this thought, with St. Thomas' prayer that we may more deeply penetrate and more fully realize the Mystery that is our life: "Life has but one meaning for us: to grow in the love of God..."

—JOSEPH E. NORTON

**PADRE PRO**  
by Fanchon Royer  
Kenedy, \$3.50

I have always been intrigued by this contemporary saint of modern times—Padre Pro, therefore I looked forward to an enjoyable interlude delving more deeply into his life. This book was a great disappointment in as much as it told little of his life but much of the story of Mexico in those troubled times.

Fanchón Royer is an excellent historian but a very poor biographer. One is intensely interested in a true picture of the daily family life of the Mexican of moderate means then he will enjoy this book. If on the other hand he is more interested in a deeper and more intimate knowledge of what made Padre Pro a modern apostle and martyr, he must be willing to delve deeply into the tales of Mexican family life with innumerable excursions into the by-paths of Mexican rule, customs, culture and traditions. These excursions although fascinating are very definitely not giving one a more complete picture of this unusual man, Miguel Agustin Pro. While reading this book I continually felt as if I were taking lessons in Spanish and that if the book was about anyone it was about Josefa, his very wise and tolerant mother. It is of course true that in order to more fully comprehend any person of note, we need an intimate knowledge of his early environment, but is such detail necessary?

When the author finally embarks upon the life of Father Pro, she once more digresses into minute descriptions of his friends, his co-workers and continually the family. We always have the pastoral countryside, the vicissitudes of the cities and the horrors of the Mexico of Calles reign in the frame for the picture of Miguel Agustin Pro; usually the frame is so minute and vivid as to completely overshadow the picture.—ALVA ABER

**NATURE AND GRACE**  
by Matthias Joseph Scheeben  
Herder, \$4.95

When earnest Catholics disagree and start calling each other names, the usual epithets are: "You Jansenist," or "You Pelagian." The Jansenists

are all those suspected of an exaggerated supernaturalism, too much emphasis on grace and not enough on nature. Their opponents are, of course, the naturalists. Now this is precisely the quarrel that Matthias Joseph Scheeben, a German theologian of the last century, examines in his first great work *Nature and Grace*, only recently translated. Scheeben was writing against the rationalists of his own day.

The difficulty of this problem lies in the fact that the Church seems to say contradictory things in its condemnations of the two extremest positions. When defending nature against the Lutherans she sees it capable of great things. On the other hand, she seems to picture nature as helpless when reproving the naturalists. Scheeben shows that the solution lies in making a clear distinction between nature and super-nature, between our natural life as given by God and the elevated life to which we are drawn through grace—also by God, of course, but in a different way. He shows that the Church in her various statements, and St. Augustine, depending on whom he's attacking, doesn't always specify the level of human action under discussion. Nature can do absolutely nothing of itself which is meritorious of eternal life or in the domain of the divine. In other words, it cannot do what God has destined us to do. That doesn't mean nature can't do good things in the natural order. It can, and not just in building houses or keeping accounts, but in knowing God as He can be known through creatures and loving Him as the author of creation.

Having given full credit to nature, Scheeben goes on to exalt grace, to show that it is a real participation in the divine life, a new order of knowing and loving. He emphasizes the connection of grace with the divine mysteries, a theme he later developed more fully in *The Mysteries of Christianity*. Then he deals with the relationship between nature and grace. We are used to hearing it said that grace builds on nature, but taken alone this is a kind of glib phrase, which can even give quite wrong impressions. It is not Scheeben's expression. He always emphasizes the distinction between the two orders. But a harmony between them exists in virtue of their operation with the same faculties, and the fact that they have the same Author. Grace does not destroy nature and neither does nature grow by itself into grace.

Nevertheless grace pervades nature, and in heaven there will be a fusion, a marriage between the two. Nature will not thereby be destroyed, but having been crucified, will be glorified. The analogy is with the Incarnation.

Though difficult, this is an interesting book, especially because the error Scheeben combatted is now virtually all-pervading. Not only do men think they can do all good things by their own efforts, but they have very odd ideas of what these good things are—their own glorification, Scheeben would say.—CAROL JACKSON

**A HISTORY OF MODERN  
EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY**

by James Collins

Bruce, \$9.75

This book, as the author tells us in his preface, is designed for students who already have had some training in Scholastic Philosophy, and who are about to experience the

turky excitation of "Modern Philosophy."

Since the turn of the century we have seen the birth of many high calibre Thomists, and the consequent re-birth of Thomism—I mean as a powerful fundament of thought whose sphere of operation is meant to be the market place, not the museum. But all our best Thomists have warned against a "closed shop." However desirable that may be in industrial relations, it is extremely sterile in philosophical relations. Who can deny that for a long time Catholic philosophers have patted one another on the back in much the same fashion as the two donkeys braying over each other's classical beauty.

Dr. Collins has written this book—and I think it is an intellectual work of mercy—to help establish "fruitful intellectual communication between Scholastic teachings and the representative modern systems." In other words, while he brings to his analysis the apparatus and perceptions of a thoroughly trained Scholastic, he writes so as to be understood by men for whom St. Thomas is but a figure on a stained glass window. A philosophical sheep in wolf's clothing," you may say, but his is a task of first importance in the world of thought today.

My own opinion is that he does quite a good job. He does not pretend to be encyclopedic. Nevertheless, in something like 850 well-packed pages, he considers twenty major figures in the modern European philosophical tradition.

In each chapter he gives some brief biographical data that helps round out the intelligibility of the thinker's approach. Then he goes on to explain the method and the principles which thread through the whole system. Special attention is paid to the philosopher's position with regard to certain key problems. These are chiefly: the object of the human intellect, the relation between God and the world, the nature of the human composite, and the foundation of morality.

This review may be fittingly terminated with a succinct paragraph from Dr. Collins' first chapter, a paragraph which I think may honestly ascribe his own contribution in this history of philosophy: "Finally, St. Thomas remarks that, under God's providence, the discovery of truth is a *co-operative* task of the human race. One man's positive contribution may be quite small, when viewed in isolation, but it can be integrated with the findings of others. The total expression of truth is great and tends to a wonderful increase. This is the long-range view of the operations of a realistic philosophy, as it dominates all periods of the history of philosophy and aggregates to itself all the valuable discoveries of the human intellect concerning ultimate questions. Thus a balance is to be sought between permanent principles, healthy criticism of accepted views, and increment of fresh insights."—MICHAEL DAVID

**INDIVIDUALISM RECONSIDERED,  
AND OTHER ESSAYS**

by David Riesman

Free Press, \$6.00

When the majority of people spend a large part of their time conforming to their "peer group," those who nurture individual

thoughts are in danger of falling into the category which Professor Riesman calls "marginal." Those who enjoy such books as this probably would be typed as "bookworms." And some who have the habit of worrying about what's wrong with the world, and will take from such a book as this thoughts that will serve as keys to a wider understanding of their environment, might be classed as "amateur and part-time observers."

This book, then, is for marginal people, bookworms, and amateur social observers, all of whom are discussed in it. I liked the book because I could be pushed into all three categories. Nor do I mean that its appeal is limited, since Professor Riesman knows his way around in the language. It is highly readable and bristles with quotables.

The book has eight sections on individualism, marginality, popular culture, Veblen, Freud, totalitarianism and method in the social sciences. There are chapters on movies, popular music, anti-Semitism, football, old age and utopias. This gives an indication of its great variety.

For *Integrity* readers, many of whom are amateur sociologists whom Professor Riesman thinks should be enlisted to study "the hall of mirrors which is society," there are many suggestions for secular meditation in this book. This I would like to illustrate by quotations. We might begin by self-examination to see if we are among those mentioned on page 24: "Therefore even those people who are sure they know what the truth is may not succeed in communicating it, but something quite the opposite, as the history of every reform movement testifies."

Do we hope for an ideal Christian society out of general truths according to some past pattern? We might heed what the author says on page 34: "I do not mean that . . . there is no malaise in our great middle and working classes in urban life, but rather, on the one hand, that the intellectuals greatly underestimate the terror, misery and disorder of the 'status society' of the past, which they so much admire, while underestimating, on the other hand, the tremendous achievements of modern men in making themselves comfortable in the face of the novelty of a fluid industrial society."

A sociologist is thought of as one who studies what makes the group a bunch. Professor Riesman defends the individual. He does not believe in sanding off the burrs which keep us marginal, to the smoothness that will aid us in conforming like the ideal suburban community where "the adults have neuroses, the children have allergies." He deplores the submergence of talent in children for the sake of making them regular guys for a few years. He defends the right to be different yet he has compassion for those who are striving for group identification. He faces the banalities of American culture without snobbery and like Marshall McLuhan attempts to see toward what ends they are shaping our culture



pite us.

I feel that I have inadequately suggested the wealth in this book, but any want to study the maelstrom of our fluid existence Professor Riesman's book will point out some coves of understanding. We have philosophers with little observation, and observers with only sterile measurement. David Riesman is a happy combination of observer and philosopher.

—JOHN C. HICKS

**SAINTS IN HELL**  
by Gilbert Cesbron  
trans. by John Russell  
Doubleday, \$3.75

A reality quite the antithesis of the world of "Pollyanna Catholicism" so penetratingly described in the July issue of *Integrity* is the milieu of M. Cesbron's *Saints in Hell*.

The author in his preface admits that he has

no hope of convincing anyone by his book; he hopes only to "unsettle" the reader—and that he does!

For Father Pierre, the worker priest, and Sagny, the slum suburb of Paris which is his mission, do unsettle the complacent, do provoke a thoughtful "why." Here are no pat answers, no glib solutions to the desperate physical and moral misery from which our world aches. The priest, humble, frail, so human, often even imprudent, attempts to live the faith among his wretched flock. For the most part he cannot solve their problems, or ease their lot, but he can be a witness among them of Christ suffering with them, and by his love (a tremendous longing for souls is Father's) give them some notion of the Father's love for them.

In his year at Sagny as he compassionately identifies himself with each soul who needs him (and he especially perceives the need of the communist, Henri, and the anarchist, Louis) Father Pierre meets more failure than success; yet he understands the words of Father Bernard, his predecessor: "We have served some purpose you see. Our reverses are more useful than our successes." Is his failure though a symptom of the essential wrongness of the movement?

Here then it seems is the crux of the problem of M. Cesbron's novel and of the whole problem of the worker priest: may the priest in identifying himself with the worker lose his priestliness; or in presenting God as Mystical Love, inadvertently underplay the external organization of His Church and His Sacraments; may he even be confused and contaminated by the maelstrom into which he has plunged?

The author dramatizes the problem in the conversation in which Father Pierre answers to his archbishop for his seeming imprudence. The arguments for each side are cogent, and as M. Cesbron does not attempt to draw conclusions neither can the reader. Perhaps the ban on the worker priest in France is the conclusion.

The novel as such is often episodic and lacks structure; the characters are shadows against whom Pierre is high-lighted. The success of the book, however, lies in its sympathetic and timely picture of the worker priest with his grasp of the universality of our faith and his only weapon, love.

—DOROTHY C. LABARBERA

George N. Shuster's book *Religion Behind the Iron Curtain* (Macmillan, \$4.00) is a quietly written account of the religious situation in those countries taken over by communism. Everywhere the basic pattern has been the same: imprisonment of prelates, confusion of the flock, one religious minority pitted against the other, intimidation, unfair trials. Dr. Shuster gives the historical background of each country, and this helps immeasurably to understand the people's reaction to contemporary events. The over-all effect of the book is frightening (despite certain tedious passages). Read it for proof that the "children of this world" are not only wiser but completely baffling to the "children of light."—D.D.

*Animals Under the Rainbow* by Aloysius Roch (Sheed & Ward, \$2.75) is a book of tiny tales about the saints and the various animals whom they befriended or who befriended them. Some of the stories stretch the imagination, but my children (3, 6 and 8) enjoyed them. St. Rose of Lima allowed flies to swarm all over her—but then if you ever have observed the delight of a baby watching the antics of a fly, you get a glimpse of all things in nature fitting into God's plans, and the saints appreciated this. There are lovely woodcuts by Agnes Miller Parker.—M.N.

*The Catholic Bible Play Book* (Seahorse Press, \$1.00) is a good book for children from 7 to 13 years old. It has games, toys to make, coloring pages, drawings, pictures, puzzles and stories about the Bible, even Christmas cards. I like it because it is good on rainy days when I don't have anything to do.

—Michael Nolan

## You Are Not Your Own

Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A.

Oftentimes during the past ten years when young, apostolic lay people gathered, a quiet Augustinian priest was in their midst. He had his ear to the ground, he listened to their discussions, and many times, he talked to them on the Church, the Mass, on what it means to be a Christian. A book on the Church in action, it touches the family, the parish, the worlds of industry and politics, the single life. It presents the tools of Christianity and the meaning of love. It gives us the ideals and goals taken from the actual experiences of people who may live in your block or parish.

Foreword by Samuel Cardinal Stritch

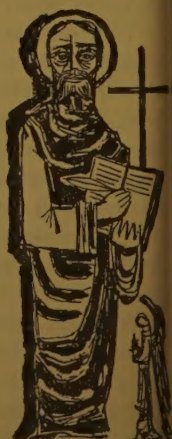
\$3.25

## The Church: A Divine Mystery

Roger Hasseveldt

In a year when much of the religious world looks hopefully toward Christian unity, Father Hasseveldt's study of the Church as drawn from Holy Scripture will provide valuable information on the problem of Church unity. The whole doctrine of the Church needs clarification and theological development, and this book presents a clear scriptural analysis. For the serious reader there are study projects at the end of each chapter.

\$4.50



OCTOBER 18,  
FEAST OF ST. LUKE

AT ALL  
BOOKSTORES  
**FIDES**  
CHICAGO  
ILLINOIS



**YOU CAN TELL A MAN BY THE BOOKS HE READS . . .**



**YOU CAN TELL A BOOK CLUB BY ITS SELECTIONS . . .**

Selections to stimulate your mind, to help you grow spiritually and mentally, offered at big discounts, make **The Thomas More Book Club** the book club that discriminating readers are proud to belong to.

You can have the most significant books of the year at discounts of 25% to 35% simply by joining the Thomas More Book Club—the unique club whose purpose is to give you books with Catholic principles and high literary standards at minimum of expense. We offer no “free” dividend books, but give you direct savings on **all** the books of **your** choice. There is no membership fee in the Thomas More Book Club. Your only obligation is to purchase four Club selections, at the special discounts, each year you are a member.



### *Recent Selections:*

**THE PATH TO ROME**

by Hilaire Belloc

**CAIN**

by Rogier Van Aerde

**BREAD IN THE WILDERNESS**

by Thomas Merton

**CATHERINE OF SIENA**

by Sigrid Undset

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS**

by Martin C. D'Arcy, S.J.

**WEEPING CROSS**

by Henry Longan Stuart

**BORN CATHOLICS**

edited by F. J. Sheed

**THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
AND THE AMERICAN IDEA**

by Theodore Maynard

**DON'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY SLIP BY . . .**

Enroll now in the book club that gives you the books you want to read at the prices you want to pay. Fill out the application below, mail it to us and we'll send you your first big Newsletter with full descriptions of the current book selections and details of the other money saving offers available only to Thomas More Book Club members.



# **THE THOMAS MORE BOOK CLUB**

**210 West Madison Street, Chicago 6, Illinois**

Please enroll me in the Thomas More Book Club. I understand that I will receive a Newsletter every month and that I need to purchase only four Club selections at the **SPECIAL DISCOUNTS** each year I am a member.

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

Zone \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ inc \_\_\_\_\_

## *We Are Madly In Favor*



of books by converts on how they came into the Church, but the rest of us too have something to say, and in **BORN CATHOLICS** (\$3.50) assembled by F. J. Sheed, nineteen speak up on what they like and don't like, why they are still Catholics . . . There's more about this book in the current number of Sheed & Ward's **OWN TRUMPET**.

**ST. BRIGID OF IRELAND** (\$2.00) by Alice Curtayne, tells the story of a saint we had never known much about, but who we now feel is a friend for life. There is a piece of this book reprinted in the **TRUMPET**.

**THE WESTERN FATHERS** (\$4.00) edited by F. R. Hoare, is the first in the **Makers of Christendom Series**. It contains the biographies of Sts. Martin of Tours, Augustine of Hippo, Honoratus of Arles, Germanus of Auxerre and Ambrose which were written by their own contemporaries. The second in this series is also ready: **THE ANGLO-SAXON MISSIONARIES IN GERMANY** (\$3.50), biographies of St. Boniface (a one-man lending library) and the record of the travels of St. Willibald, who walked all over Italy and the Holy Land. As you will have gathered, this series is a collection of contemporary biographical documents from the opening of the Christian era on. For much more about it, see the **TRUMPET**.

**THE LIE ABOUT THE WEST** (\$1.75) is Douglas Jerrold's devastating reply to Professor Toynbee's **The World and the West**. This has been out long enough to be reviewed in England, though it is only just out here, so we have quoted some of the English reviews in the **TRUMPET**.

**LOVE AND VIOLENCE** (\$4.00) edited by Father Bruno de Jesus-Marie, O.C.D., is a symposium on the same lines as **Satan**. **BLACK POPES** (\$2.50) by Archbishop Roberts, S.J. is on the use and abuse of authority in the Church, and the way all authority is related to the Fatherhood of God. Both these books are, we feel, very **INTEGRITYish**.

You will find more about them in—yes, the **TRUMPET**. We have gone on about this four-times-a-year bulletin by way of finding out if there are still a few **INTEGRITY** readers who don't see it, and might like to. To get the **TRUMPET**, free and postpaid, write to Pirie MacGill at Sheed & Ward, New York 3, but if you want the books themselves, don't come to us—go to a bookstore—or a library.